

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

February 19, 2003 LB 54, 164

successful. Mr. Clerk, next agenda item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: LB 54 was introduced by Senator Erdman, Byars, and Jensen. (Read title.) The bill was read for the first time on January 9, referred to the Health and Human Services Committee. That committee reports the bill to General File with committee amendments attached. (AM0181, Legislative Journal page 400.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Erdman, you're recognized to open on the advancement of LB 54.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. LB 54 is a bill that I've been working with the Department of Health and Human Services on. I'll give you a brief update of what the intent is, and then we do have a committee amendment that Senator Jensen, as Chair of the committee, I believe, will be discussing. But I'll give you a little background of the intention of LB 54. Currently, by statute, between 12 and 21 hours of training are required to become a home...required for a home to become licensed to provide foster care. This bill would allow the department to waive the training requirement, still issue a license to a family who provide care only for their own relatives, which in turn will allow the department to claim federal Title IV-E funds for the placement costs of many of these children. Title IV-E is a part of the Social Security Act. Federal IV-E funding is available to cover the costs of children in out-of-home placement when certain requirements are met. One of those requirements is that the home in which the child is placed must be licensed for foster care. Of the approximately 4,700 wards of the department who are in out-of-home care, the vast majority are placed in licensed homes or facilities, thus potentially eligible for the Title IV-E payment. However, about 700 of them are placed with relatives who are approved for placement rather than being licensed. The choice of relatives to go with approval rather than licensing is usually made because approval does not require participation in training, which many relatives consider to be excessive, since they will be taking care of a family member. Both the approval process and the licensing process require a criminal history background check, and check